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THE DOGMAS OF JUDAISM.

[Concluded from page 61.]

THE Anti-Maimonists can be divided into two classes. The one class categorically denies that Judaism has dogmas. I shall have occasion to touch on this view when I come to speak of Abarbanel. Here I pass at once to the second class of Anti-Maimonists. This consists of those who agree with Maimonides as to the existence of dogmas in Judaism, but who differ from him as to what these dogmas are, or who give a different enumeration of them.

As the first of these Anti-Maimonists we may regard Nachmanides, who, in his famous "Sermon in the Presence of the King," speaks of three fundamental principles: Creation, Omniscience of God, and Providence. Next comes R. Abba Mari ben Moses, of Montepellier. He wrote at the beginning of the 14th century, and is famous in Jewish history for his zeal against the study of philosophy. We possess a small pamphlet by him dealing with our subject, and it forms a kind of prologue to his collection of controversial letters against the rationalists of his time. He lays down three articles as the fundamental teachings of Religion: 1. Metaphysical: The existence of God, including His Unity and Incorporeality; 2. Mosaic: *Creatio ex nihilo* by God—a consequence of this principle is the belief that God is capable of altering the laws of nature at His pleasure; 3. Ethical: Special Providence—*i.e.*, God knows all our actions in all their details. Abba Mari does not mention Maimonides' Thirteen Articles. But it would be false to conclude that he rejected the belief in the coming of the Messiah, or any other article of Maimonides. The whole tone and tendency of this pamphlet is polemical, and it is therefore probable that he only urged those points which were either doubted or explained in an unorthodox way by the sceptics of his time.¹

¹ See pages 1—19 of his polemical work *מנחת קנאות* (Presburg, 1838). Compare Renan-Neubauer, *Les Rabbins Français*, p. 679.

Another scholar, of Provence, who wrote but twenty years later than Abba Mari—R. David ben Samuel d'Estella (1320)—speaks of the seven pillars of religion. They are: Revelation, Providence, Reward and Punishment, the Coming of the Messiah, Resurrection of the Dead, *Creatio ex nihilo*, and Free Will.¹

Of authors living in other countries, I have to mention here R. Shemarjah, of Crete, who flourished at about the same time as R. David d'Estella, and is known from his efforts to reconcile the Karaites with the Rabbanites. This author wrote a book for the purpose of furnishing Jewish students with evidence for what he considered the five fundamental teachings of Judaism, viz.: 1. The Existence of God; 2. Incorporeality of God; 3. His Absolute Unity; 4. That God created heaven and earth; 5. That God created the world after His will 5106 years ago—the latter (1346) being the year in which Shemarjah wrote these words.²

In Portugal, at about the same time, we find R. David ben Jom Tob Bilia adding to the articles of Maimonides thirteen of his own, which he calls the "Fundamentals of the Thinking Man." Five of these articles relate to the functions of the human soul, that, according to him, emanated from God, and to the way in which this divine soul receives its punishment and reward. The other eight articles are as follows: 1. The belief in the existence of spiritual beings—angels; 2. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 3. The belief in the existence of another world, and that this other world is only a spiritual one; 4. The Torah is above philosophy; 5. The Torah has an outward (literary) meaning and an inward (allegorical) meaning; 6. The text of the Torah is not subject to any emendation; 7. The reward of a good action is the good work itself, and the doer must not expect any other reward; 8. It is only by the "commands relating to the heart," for instance, the belief in one eternal God, the loving and fearing him, and not through good actions that man attains the highest degree of perfection.³ Perhaps it would be suitable to mention here another contemporaneous writer, who also numbers twenty-six articles. The name of this writer is unknown, and his articles are only

¹ *Hebräische Bibliographie* (VIII., 63 and 103). Compare Neubauer, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, IX., 215. See also Appendix A.

² See *אוצר הספרים*, p. 41, No. 781, and Steinschneider, *Cat. München*, No. 210. But from the *יוחנן אלימנו* ר' ליקוטי ר', p. 133a (Cat. Neubauer 2.243) it would seem that R. Shemarjah considers the belief in *Creatio ex nihilo* as the most important article. Compare also Graetz, *History*, VII., 299, where the date 5106 is questioned; Neubauer, *Revue*, X. 68.

³ See the collection *דברי חכמים*, by Ashkenasi, pp. 56b, etc.

gathered from quotations by later authors. It would seem from these quotations that the articles of this unknown author consisted mostly of statements emphasizing the belief in the attributes of God: as, His Eternity, His Wisdom and Omnipotence, and the like.¹

More important for our subject are the productions of the 15th century, especially those of Spanish authors. The fifteen articles of R. Lipman Mulhausen, in the preface to his well-known *Sefer Nizzachon* (1410), differ but slightly from those of Maimonides. In accordance with the anti-Christian tendency of his polemical book, he lays more stress on the two articles of Unity and Incorporeality, and makes of them four. We can therefore dismiss him with this short remark, and pass at once to the Spanish Rabbis.

The first of these is R. Chasdai Ibn Crescas, who composed his famous treatise, "The Light of God," about 1405. Chasdai's book is well known for its attacks on Aristotle, and also for its influence on Spinoza. But Chasdai deals also with Maimonides' Thirteen Articles, to which he was very strongly opposed. Already in his preface he attacks Maimonides for speaking, in his "Book of the Commandments," of the belief in the existence of God as an "affirmative precept." Chasdai thinks it absurd; for every commandment must be dictated by some authority, but on whose authority can we dictate the acceptance of this authority? His general objection to the Thirteen Articles is that Maimonides confounded dogmas or *fundamental* beliefs of Judaism, without which Judaism is inconceivable, with beliefs or *doctrines* which Judaism inculcates, but the denial of which, though involving a strong heresy, does not make Judaism impossible. He maintains that if Maimonides meant only to count fundamental teachings, there are not more than seven; but that if he intended also to include doctrines, he ought to have enumerated sixteen. As beliefs of the first class—namely, fundamental beliefs—he considers the following articles: 1. God's knowledge of our actions; 2. Providence; 3. God's omnipotence—even to act against the laws of nature; 4. Prophecy; 5. Free will; 6. The aim of the Torah is to make man long after the closest communion with God. The belief in the existence of God, Chasdai thinks, is an axiom with which every religion must begin, and he is therefore uncertain whether to include it as a dogma or not. As to the doctrines which every Jew is bound to believe, but without which Judaism is not im-

¹ Albo, *Ikkarim*, ch. iii.; probably the same author that is mentioned by Duran in his book *אוהב משפט*, 13b.

possible, Chasdai divides them into two sections: (A.) 1. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 2. Immortality of the soul; 3. Reward and Punishment; 4. Resurrection of the dead; 5. Immutability of the Torah; 6. Superiority of the prophecy of Moses; 7. That the High Priest received the instructions sought for from God, when he put his questions through the medium of the Urim and Tummim; 8. The coming of the Messiah. (B.) Doctrines which are expressed by certain religious ceremonies, and on which belief these ceremonies are conditioned: 1. The belief in the efficacy of prayer—as well as that the benediction of the priests has the power of conveying to us the blessing of God; 2. God is merciful to the penitent; 3. Certain days in the year—for instance, the Day of Atonement—are especially qualified to bring us near to God, if we keep them in the way we are commanded. That Chasdai is a little arbitrary in the choice of his “doctrines,” I need hardly say. Indeed, Chasdai’s importance for the dogma-question consists more in his critical suggestions than in his positive results. He was, as we have seen, the first to make the distinction between fundamental teachings, which form the basis of Judaism, and those other simple Jewish doctrines, without which Judaism is not impossible. Very daring is his remark, when proving that Reward and Punishment, Immortality of the soul, and Resurrection of the dead must not be considered as the basis of Judaism, that the highest ideal of religion is to serve God without any hope of reward. Even more daring are his words concerning the Immutability of the Law. He says: “Some have argued that, since God is perfection, so must also His law be perfect, and thus unsusceptible of improvement.” But he does not think this argument conclusive, though the fact in itself (the Immutability of the Law) is true. For one might answer that this perfection of the Torah could only be in accordance with the intelligence of those for whom it was meant; but as soon as the recipients of the Torah have advanced to a higher state of perfection, the Torah must also be altered to suit their advanced intelligence. A pupil of Chasdai illustrates the words of his master by a medical parallel. The physician has to adapt his medicaments to the various stages through which his patient has to pass. That he changes his prescription does not, however, imply that his medical knowledge is imperfect, or that his earlier remedies were ignorantly chosen; the varying condition of the invalid was the cause of the variation in the doctor’s treatment. Similarly, were not the Immutability of the Torah a “doctrine,” one might maintain that the perfection of the Torah

would not be inconsistent with the assumption that it was susceptible of modification, in accordance with our changing and progressive circumstances. But all these arguments are purely of a theoretic character; for, practically, every Jew, according to Chasdai, has to accept all these beliefs, whether he terms them fundamental teachings or only Jewish doctrines.¹

Some years later, though he finished his work in the same year as Chasdai, R. Simon ben Duran (1366-1444), a younger contemporary of the former, made his researches on dogmas. His studies on this subject form a kind of introduction to his commentary on Job, which he finished in the year 1405. Duran is not so strongly opposed to the Thirteen Articles as Chasdai, or as another "thinker of our people," who thought them an arbitrary imitation of the thirteen attributes of God. Duran tries to justify Maimonides; but nevertheless he agrees with "earlier authorities," who formulated the Jewish creed in Three Articles—The Existence of God, Revelation, and Reward and Punishment, under which Duran thinks the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides may be easily classified. Most interesting are his remarks concerning the validity of dogmas. He tells us that only those are to be considered as heretics who stick to their own opinions, though they know that they are contradictory to the views of the Torah. But those who accept the fundamental teachings of Judaism, but are led by their deep studies and earnest reflection to differ in details from the opinions current among their co-religionists, and explain certain passages in the Scripture in their own way, must by no means be considered as heretics. We must therefore, Duran proceeds to say, not blame such men as Maimonides, who gave an allegorical interpretation to certain passages in the Bible about miracles, or R. Levi ben Gershon, who followed certain un-Jewish views in relation to the belief in *Creatio ex nihilo*. It is only the views that are condemnable, but not those who cherish them. God forbid, says Duran, that such a thing should happen in Israel as to condemn honest inquirers on account of their differing opinions. It would be interesting to know of how many divines, as tolerant as this persecuted Jew, the 15th century can boast.²

¹ See אור ה', Ed. Johannisberg, in the preface, pp. 20a, 44b, 59b, and 61a and 62b. The style of the author is very obscure, and the book is full of misprints. See also Joel's essay on this author (Breslau, 1866).

² Of Duran's many works, we have here to consider his commentary מנן אבות on Job, pp. 13 *seq.*, and the first pages of his book מנן אבות (Leghorn, 1758). See also Dr. Jaulus' essay in the *Monatsschrift*, 1874.

We can now pass to a more popular but less original writer on our theme. I refer to R. Joseph Albo, the author of the *Ikkarim*, who was the pupil of Chasdai, a younger contemporary of Duran, and wrote at a much later period than these authors. Graetz has justly denied him much originality. The chief merit of Albo consists in popularising other people's thoughts, though he does not always care to mention their names. And the student who is a little familiar with the contents of the book *Ikkarim* will easily find that Albo has taken his best ideas either from Chasdai or from Duran.¹ As it is of little consequence to us whether an article of faith is called "stem," or "root," or "branch," there is scarcely anything fresh left to quote in the name of Albo. Dr. Löw, of Szegedin, was indeed right, when he answered an adversary who challenged him—"Who would dare to declare me as an heretic as long as I confess the three Articles laid down by Albo?" with the words "Albo himself." For, after all the subtle distinctions Albo makes between different classes of dogmas, he declares that every one who denies even the immutability of the Law or the coming of the Messiah, which are, according to him, articles of minor importance, is a heretic who will be excluded from the world to come.² But there is one point in his book which is worth noticing. It was suggested to him by Maimonides. Still Albo has the merit of having emphasised it as it deserves. Among the articles which he calls branches, Albo counts the belief that the perfection of man, which leads to eternal life, can be obtained by the fulfilling of *one* commandment. But this command must be, as Maimonides points out, done without any worldly regard, and only for the sake of the love of God.³ When one considers how many platitudes are repeated year by year by certain theologians on the subject of Jewish legalism we cannot lay enough stress on this article of Albo, and we ought to make it better known than it hitherto has been.

Though I cannot enter here into the enumeration of the Maimonists, I must not leave unmentioned the name of R. Nissim ben Moses of Marseilles, the first great Maimonist, who flourished about the end of the thirteenth century, and

¹ See Schlesinger's introduction and notes to *Ikkarim*, and Dr. S. Back's lecture on Joseph Albo. For the relations of Chasdai and Duran, see Joel's Essay, p. 82, and Jaulus, *Monatsschrift*, p. 463. For his plagiarisms from Rabbi Nissim, see Brüll, *Jahrbuch*, IV. 52.

² *Ikkarim*, I., ch. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, I., 23, and III., 29, and Maimonides' Commentary to Mishnah, end of tractate *Makkoth*.

was considered as one of the most enlightened thinkers of his age. From the extracts I shall publish in Appendix A from his *Sepher Hanissim*, contained in MS. in Oxford and the British Museum, it will be seen that he greatly influenced his successors, and perhaps also suggested their systems to them, though he himself adhered to the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. Another great Maimonist deserving special attention is R. Abraham ben Shem Tob Bibago, who may perhaps be regarded as the most prominent among those who undertook to defend Maimonides against the attacks of Chasdai and others. Bibago wrote "The Path of Belief" in the second half of the 15th century, and was, as Dr. Steinschneider aptly describes him, a *Denkgläubiger*. But, above all, he was a believing Jew. When he was once asked, at the table of King John II., of Aragon, by a Christian scholar, "Are you the Jewish philosopher?" he answered, "I am a Jew who believes in the Law given to us by our teacher Moses, though I have studied philosophy." Bibago was such a devoted admirer of Maimonides that he could not tolerate any opposition against him. He speaks in one passage of the prudent people of his time who, in desiring to be looked upon as orthodox by the great mob, calumniated the teacher (Maimonides), and depreciated his merits. Bibago's book is very interesting, especially in its controversial parts; but in respect to dogmas he is, as already said, a Maimonist, and does not contribute any new point on our subject.¹ To return to the Anti-Maimonists of the second half of the 15th century. As such may be considered R. Isaac Aramah, who speaks of three foundations of religion: *Creatio ex nihilo*, Revelation (?), and the belief in a world to come.² Next to be mentioned is R. Joseph Jabez, who also accepts only three articles: *Creatio ex nihilo*, Individual Providence, and the Unity of God. Under these three heads he tries to classify the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides.³

The last Spanish writer on our subject is R. Isaac Abarbanel. His treatise on the subject is known under the title "Rosh Amanah," and was finished in the year 1495. The greatest part of this treatise forms a defence of Maimonides, many points in which are taken from Bibago.⁴ But in spite of this fact, Abarbanel must not be considered a Maimonist. It is

¹ Part 5 of Bibago's *דרך אמונה* (Constantinople, 1521), treats exclusively of the Thirteen Articles. Compare Steinschneider in *Monatsschrift*, 1883, p. 79.

² See *עקידת יצחק*, section 55. The meaning of the word *תורה* in this passage is not quite clear.

³ See his *יסוד האמונה* and *מאמר האהדות*.

⁴ Steinschneider, *Monatsschrift*, etc., p. 95.

only a feeling of piety towards Maimonides, or perhaps rather a fondness for argument that made him defend Maimonides against Chasdai and others. His own view is that it is a mistake to formulate dogmas of Judaism, since every word in the Torah has to be considered as a dogma for itself.¹ It was only, says Abarbanel, by following the example of non-Jewish scholars that Maimonides and others were induced to lay down dogmas. The non-Jewish philosophers are in the habit of accepting in every science certain indisputable axioms from which they deduce the propositions which are less evident. The Jewish philosophers in a similar way sought for first principles in religion from which the whole of the Torah ought to be considered as a deduction. But, thinks Abarbanel, the Torah as a revealed code is under no necessity of deducing things from each other, for all the commands came from the same divine authority, and, therefore, all are alike evident, and have the same certainty. On this and similar grounds Abarbanel refused to accept dogmatic articles for Judaism, and he thus became the head of the school that forms a class by itself among the Anti-Maimonists to which many of the greatest Cabbalists also belong. But it is idle talk to cite this school in aid of the modern theory that Judaism has no dogmas. As we have seen it was rather an *embarras de richesse* that prevented Abarbanel from accepting the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. To him and to the Cabbalists the Torah consists of at least 613 Articles.

Abarbanel wrote his book with which we have just dealt at Naples. And it is Italy to which, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, we have to look chiefly for religious speculation. But the philosophers of Italy are still less independent of Maimonides than their predecessors in Spain. Thus we find that R. David Messir Leon, R. David Vital, and others were Maimonists.² Even the otherwise refined and original thinker, R. Elijah Del Medigo (who died about

¹ See Duran **אוהב משפט**, 14b, where this view is already hinted at, Compare R. Solomon ben Addereth, as quoted above, where he speaks of **כוללת מן העיקרים תרי"ג תורה שלמה**; but it is not probable that he uses **עיקרים** in the philosophical sense.

² A list of the Maimonists will be found in Appendices A and B. But I must remark that, owing to the kindness of Dr. Gaster, who allowed me to have a glance at the library of the Ramsgate College, I was able to examine there a MS. by R. David Messir Leon, which throws a fresh light on the life and views of this scholar. His views on dogmas, as given in this MS., are widely at variance from his opinion, known to us from his printed book **תהלה לרור**. His relation to Abarbanel deserves closer examination. Hoping to publish soon a monograph on this author, I defer the treatment of these points for that occasion.

the end of the 15th century) becomes almost rude when he speaks of the adversaries of Maimonides in respect to dogmas. "It was only," he says, "the would-be philosopher that dared to question the articles of Maimonides. Our people have always the bad habit of thinking themselves competent to attack the greatest authorities as soon as they have got some knowledge of the subject. Genuine thinkers, however, attach very little importance to their objections."¹

Indeed, it seems as if the energetic protests of Del Medigo scared away the Anti-Maimonists for more than a century. Even in the following 17th century we have to notice only two Anti-Maimonists. The one is Rabbi Tobjah, the priest (1652), who was of Polish descent, studied in Italy, and lived as a medical man in France. He seems to refuse to accept the belief in the Immutability of the Torah, and in the coming of the Messiah as fundamental teachings of Judaism.² The other, at the end of the 17th century (1695), is R. Abraham Chayim Viterabo, of Italy. He accepts only six articles: 1. Existence of God. 2. Unity. 3. Incorporeality. 4. That God was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, and that the prophecy of Moses is true. 5. Revelation (including the historical parts of the Torah). 6. Reward and Punishment. As to the other articles of Maimonides, Viterabo, in opposition to other half-hearted Anti-Maimonists, declares that the man who denies them is *not* to be considered as a heretic; though he ought to believe them.³

I have now arrived at the limit I set to myself at the beginning of this essay. For there is, between the times of Viterabo and those of Mendelssohn, hardly to be found any serious opposition to Maimonides worth noticing here. Still I must mention the name of R. Saul Berlin (died 1794); there is much in his opinions on dogmas which will help us the better to understand the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. As the reader has seen, I have refrained so far from reproducing here the apologies which were made by many Maimonists in behalf of the Thirteen Articles. For, after all their elaborate pleas, none of them was able to clear Maimonides of the charge of having confounded dogmas or fundamental teachings with doctrines. It is also true that the Fifth Article—that prayer and worship must only be

¹ See *בהינת הדת*, ed. Reggio, p. 28.

² See *מעשה טוביה* (Venice, 1707), 16a and 23a. His language is very vague.

³ See *אמונת חכמים* in collection *טעם זקנים*, by Ashkenasi, p. 29b. We think this a very important work, and we must strongly recommend it to the reader.

afforded to God—cannot be considered even as a doctrine, but as a simple precept. And there are other difficulties which all the distinctions of the Maimonists will never be able to solve. The only possible justification is, I think, that suggested by a remark of R. Saul. This author, who was himself like his friend and older contemporary—Mendelssohn, a strong Anti-Maimonist, among other remarks, maintains that dogmas must never be laid down but with regard to the necessities of the time.¹

Now R. Saul certainly did not doubt that Judaism is based on eternal truths which can in no way be shaken by new modes of thinking or changed circumstances. What he meant was that there are in every age certain beliefs which ought to be asserted more emphatically than others, without regard to their theological or rather logical importance. It is by this maxim that we shall be able to explain the articles of Maimonides. He asserted them, because they were necessary for his time. We know, for instance, from a letter of his son and other contemporaries, that it was just at his time that the belief in the incorporeality of God was, in the opinion of Maimonides, a little relaxed.² Maimonides, who thought such low notions of the Deity dangerous to Judaism, therefore laid down an article against them. He tells us in his "Guide" that it was far from him to condemn anyone who was not able to demonstrate the Incorporeality of God, but he stigmatised as a heretic one who refused to believe it.³ This position might be paralleled by that of a modern astronomer who, while considering it unreasonable to expect a mathematical demonstration of the movements of the earth from an ordinary unscientific man, would yet regard the person who refused to believe in such movements as an ignorant faddist.

Again, Maimonides undoubtedly knew that there may be found in the Talmud—that bottomless sea with its innumerable undercurrents—passages that are not quite in harmony with his articles; for instance, the well-known dictum of R. Hillel, who said, there is no Messiah for Israel—a passage which has already been quoted *ad nauseam* by every opponent of Maimonides from the earliest times down to the year of grace 1888. Maimonides was well aware of the existence of this and similar passages. But, being deeply convinced of the necessity of the belief in a future redemption of *Israel*—in opposition to other creeds who claim this redemp-

¹ See *בשמים ראש*, p. 251.

² Weiss, *Both Talmud*, I., 291.

³ *Guide*, I., 35, 36.

tion solely for themselves—Maimonides simply ignored the saying of R. Hillel, as an isolated opinion which contradicts all the feelings and traditions of the Jews as expressed in thousands of other passages, and especially in the liturgy. Most interesting is Maimonides' view about such isolated opinions in a letter to the wise men of Marseilles. He deals there with the question of free will and other theological subjects. After having stated his own view he goes on to say: "I know that it is possible to find in the Talmud or in the Midrash this or that saying in contradiction to the views you have heard from me. But you must not be troubled by them. One must not refuse to accept a doctrine, the truth of which has been proved, on account of its being in opposition to some isolated opinion held by this or that great authority. Is it not possible that he overlooked some important considerations when he uttered this strange opinion? It is also possible that his words must not be taken literally, and have to be explained in an allegorical way. We can also think that his words were only to be applied with regard to certain circumstances of his time, but never intended as permanent truths No man must discard his own opinions. The eyes are not directed backwards but forwards." In another place Maimonides calls the suppression of one's own opinions—for the reason of their being irreconcilable with the isolated views of some great authority—a moral suicide. By such motives Maimonides was guided when he left certain views hazarded in the Rabbinic literature unheeded, and followed what we may perhaps call the religious common-sense of his own time. We may again be certain that Maimonides was clear-headed enough to see that the words of the Torah: "And there arose no prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deut. xxxiv. 10), were as little intended to imply a doctrine as the passage relating to the king Josiah, "And like unto him was there no king that turned to the Lord with all his heart neither after him there arose any like him" (2 Kings, xxiii. 25). And none would think of declaring him a heretic who should believe another king as pious as Josiah. But living among the "imitating confessions," who claimed that their religion had superseded the law of Moses, Maimonides, consciously or unconsciously, felt himself compelled to assert the superiority of the prophecy of Moses. And so we may guess that every article of Maimonides which seems to offer difficulties to us, contains an assertion of some relaxed belief, or a protest against the pretensions of other creeds, though we are not always able to discover the exact necessity for them. On the

other hand, Maimonides did not assert the belief in free will, for which he argued so earnestly in his "Guide." The "common man," with his simple unspeculative mind, for whom these Thirteen Articles were intended,¹ "never dreamed that the will was not free," and there was no necessity of impressing on his mind things which he had never doubted.

So much about Maimonides. As to the Anti-Maimonists it could hardly escape the reader that in some of the quoted systems the difference from the view of Maimonides, is only a logical one not a theological. Of some authors again, especially those of the 13th and 14th centuries, it is not at all certain whether they intended to oppose Maimonides. Others again, as for instance R. Abba Mari, R. Lipman, and R. Joseph Jabez, acted on the same principle as Maimonides urging only those teachings of Judaism which they thought endangered. One could now, indeed, animated by the praiseworthy example given to us by Maimonides, also propose some articles of faith which are suggested to us by the necessities of our own time. One might, for instance, insert the article, "I believe that Judaism is, in the first instance, a divine religion, *not* a mere complex of racial peculiarities and tribal customs." One might again propose an article to the effect that Judaism is a proselytising religion, having the mission to bring God's kingdom on earth, and to include in that kingdom all mankind. One might also submit for consideration whether it would not be advisable to urge a little more the principle that religion means chiefly a *Weltanschauung* and worship of God by means of holiness both in thought and in action. One would even not object to accept the article laid down by R. Saul, that we have to look upon ourselves as sinners. Morbid as such a belief may be, it would, if properly impressed on our mind, have perhaps the wholesome effect of cooling down a little our self-importance and our mutual admiration that makes every progress among us almost impossible.

But it was not my purpose here to ventilate the question whether Maimonides' articles are sufficient for us, or whether we ought not to add new ones to them. Nor did I try to decide what system we ought to prefer for recitation in the Synagogue—that of Maimonides or that of Chasdai, or of any other writer. I do not think that such a recital is of much use. What I intended by this sketch is rather to make the reader *think* about Judaism, by proving that it

¹ Abarbanel, ראש אסנה, ch. 21.

does not only regulate our actions, but also our thoughts. We usually urge that in Judaism religion means life; but we forget that a life without guiding principles and thoughts is an existence not worth living. At least it was so considered by our greatest thinkers, and hence their efforts to formulate the creed of Judaism, so that men would not only be able to do the right thing, but also to think the right thing. Whether they succeeded in their attempts towards formulating the creed of Judaism or not will always remain a question. This concerns the logician more than the theologian. But surely Maimonides and his successors *did* succeed in having a religion depending directly on God, with the most ideal and highest aspirations for the future; whilst the Judaism of a great part of our modern theologians reminds one very much of the words with which the author of "Marius the Epicurean" characterises the Roman religion in the days of her decline: a religion which had been always something to be done rather than something to be thought, or believed, or to be loved.

Political economy, hygiene, statistics, are very fine things. But no sane man would for them make those sacrifices which Judaism requires from us. It is only for God's sake, to fulfil his commands and to accomplish his purpose, that religion becomes worth living and dying for. And this can only be possible with a religion which possesses dogmas.

It is true that every great religion is "a concentration of many ideas and ideals," which make this religion able to adapt itself to various modes of thinking and living. But there must always be a point round which all these ideas concentrate themselves. This centre is Dogma.

S. SCHECHTER.
